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Articles in Today's Clips Thursday, October 5, 2006

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Published October 5, 2006

'I don't want to get blamed for this'

Lisa Holland's interview with police played at murder trial

By Kevin Grasha
Lansing State Journal

In a rambling January interview with a police detective, Lisa Holland speculated her husband might tell police that she hit her 7-year-old adopted son Ricky and that he fell into a wall.

"He'll say that I was in one of my moods," Lisa Holland told Ingham County sheriff's Detective Brian Valentine.

During the interview, Valentine asked Holland to imagine several scenarios, including one where her husband implicated her in Ricky's death.

"He's lying. I did not do it," she said, later adding: "I don't want to get blamed for this."

About two hours of a 5 1/2-hour, video-recorded interview from Jan. 26 were played Wednesday during Lisa Holland's murder trial. More of the interview will be shown today.

The Williamston woman is charged with murder and child abuse in Ricky's July 2005 death. Her husband, Tim Holland, has pleaded guilty to second-degree murder and could testify as early as Friday. The trial is in its third week.

Two women who were held at the

What's next

- Lisa Holland's murder trial continues today before Ingham County Circuit Judge Paula Manderfield.
- Prosecutors are expected to show more video of Holland's Jan. 26 interview with detectives. A state police forensic scientist also is scheduled to testify.
- For a recap of the trial so far, click on this story at www.lsj.com.

Trial recap

Week 1, Sept. 18-22:

- In opening arguments, prosecutors say the case against Lisa Holland is about manipulation, deception and concealment. Defense attorneys counter the prosecution's key witness, Tim Holland, is not credible and his guilty plea was intended solely to protect himself.
- A Jackson County social worker testifies that in February 2001, Ricky said Lisa Holland tied him up at night. The social worker filed a report with Child Protective Services, but the report was not substantiated.
- Jackson school officials testify the Ricky they knew was not the same boy described and often disparaged by Lisa Holland.
- Testimony also reveals Ricky was removed from elementary school by his parents after it was determined he did not qualify for the special education services.

Week 2, Sept. 25-29

- Investigators found tiny blood stains in several rooms of Tim and Lisa Holland's Williamston home, a state police forensic scientist testifies.
- A new portrait of Lisa Holland emerges in court: A loving mother who frequently called her family physician with child-rearing questions. But testimony also revealed a doctor last saw Ricky on Sept. 20, 2002.
- Lisa Holland's hairdresser testifies that as hundreds of people searched for Ricky in early July 2005, Holland told her "she just needed to go on with her life."
- A Williamston neighbor who lived across the street from the Hollands describes an incident in May 2005 when he found Ricky in his kitchen. "They don't want me anymore," the neighbor testifies Ricky said.

This week

Ingham County Jail with Lisa Holland testified she confessed to killing Ricky by striking him with a hammer.

In a portion of the interview played Wednesday, Holland answered questions as if she didn't know Ricky was dead, but then hinted at several locations where police might find his body.

At one point, she told Valentine her husband didn't like to drive near the Dansville State Game Area. The day after the interview, Tim Holland led police to Ricky's remains in a marshlike section of the state-owned land.

Lisa Holland, who was being held at the Ingham County Jail on charges she assaulted her husband, asked to meet with detectives in January, saying she was concerned the couple's four young children were about to be placed with Tim Holland's family.

Ingham County Circuit Judge Paula Manderfield ruled in July to suppress the last 35 minutes of the Jan. 26 interview. It was during that time Lisa Holland's attorney was at the Ingham County Jail looking for her.

Attorneys also agreed to edit out a segment related to one of Ricky's younger siblings.

Contact Kevin Grasha at 267-1347 or kgrasha@lsj.com.

- A former Ingham County Jail inmate testifies Lisa Holland told her Ricky made her angry, so she threw a hammer at the boy's head. She then picked it up and hit Ricky again.
- A nurse at Ricky's Jackson elementary school testifies she reported suspected abuse to Child Protective Services at least twice.
- A second jail inmate testified Lisa Holland confessed to killing Ricky. But Holland's defense attorneys focus on how Tim Holland lied to investigators several times in the case, including during a Jan. 27 statement to police during which he told authorities Lisa killed Ricky by striking him with a hammer.

Published October 5, 2006
[From Lansing State Journal]

More letters to the editor

Question offends

On Oct. 2, while watching the debate of Jennifer Granholm and Dick DeVos on WKAR-TV, I was appalled at Tim Skubick's total lack of decency.

Gov. Granholm handled his question of whether she was indirectly responsible for the deaths of Ricky Holland, etc. This question of his was inappropriate!

Ricky Holland's parents are the ones blatantly responsible for his death. Sure, there are agencies that should have been more up-to-date and hands-on with this situation. But to even suggest that any governor was somehow responsible for Ricky's death, or others similar to his, is unconscionable!

Luci Buchanan
Lansing

Detroit News

Thursday, October 05, 2006

Wayne Briefs

Canton Township

Mother of slain toddler returns to drug rehab

The biological mother of a 2-year-old has returned to a drug recovery home after fleeing it Monday, the day the foster mother of her toddler was charged with the child's murder. Val Davis, director of Stanford House in Dearborn Heights, said Anne Marie Hirsch, 26, returned to another drug rehab clinic in Redford Township on Wednesday. Family members feared she was on a crack binge or worse after foster mother Carol Poole was charged with felony murder, involuntary.

Northville Journal

October 5, 2006

Foster mother charged with murder

Kevin Hill
Staff Writer

Carol Ann Poole allegedly gave police several different accounts of the events that led to the death of a 2-year-old foster child in her care.

Wayne County Prosecutor Kym Worthy has charged Poole, 40, with felony murder, involuntary manslaughter and first-degree child abuse in the death of Allison Newman.

According to Deputy Chief Alex Wilson of the Canton police, even if there was no malice, charges can result from other factors.

“The (child abuse) charge stems from the time delay from when she said the injury occurred to when she reported it,” said Wilson. “We’re not convinced that it wasn’t accidental. The problem is she was not forthcoming from the onset.”

Poole called 911 at 2 a.m. on Sept. 22 and reported that the child was unconscious and not breathing. The toddler was sent to Annapolis Hospital in Wayne and then flown by helicopter to University of Michigan CS Mott Children’s Hospital in Ann Arbor. Doctors removed Newman from life support later in the day.

The death of the child in Poole’s care led to the involuntary manslaughter charge, a felony. If a death occurs in the commission of a felony, then the felony murder charge is also applicable.

The Canton resident cooperated with the police investigation, but according to Wilson, she changed her story significantly.

“She gave us four totally different versions (of what happened), each one a little more descriptive and severe as to how this alleged accident occurred.”

One story involved Newman jumping on her bed that night and hitting her head against a bedpost, Wilson said. Poole told police a separate time that the child struck her head on a bathroom vanity. Another version involved Newman falling from a second-floor balcony.

An autopsy confirmed initial reports that the child had sustained severe head trauma, which led to her death.

“Children are most precious,” Worthy said in a statement released Monday. “This is true no matter the geographic, socio-economic or ethnic identity. Once the full facts are known, it will be clear that this is a felony murder.”

Poole was a licensed and trained foster parent. Newman was entrusted to her care by Lutheran Social Services in January 2006. In June she also began caring for a 3-month-old boy. The infant has been removed from Poole's care.

Poole was arraigned on the charges on Monday afternoon before Judge John MacDonald at the 35th District Court in Plymouth. MacDonald denied her bond and Poole was remanded to Wayne County Jail to await a preliminary examination on Nov. 8.

The felony murder charge carries a possible life sentence. Involuntary manslaughter and first-degree child abuse are each 15-year felonies.



Child molester sent to prison for 17.5 years

By **Daniel Pepper**
Staff Writer

Wednesday, October 4, 2006 10:06 AM EDT

The second perpetrator in a series of child molestations involving eight children at a home in Clyde Township, and more than 40,000 pictures of child pornography, was sentenced to serve 17.5 years in state prison.

James Lee Rupert, 27, was sentenced on charges of first-degree criminal sexual conduct, Friday, Sept. 29, by Allegan County Circuit Judge Harry Beach.

Rupert's wife, Melissa, 26, has been charged as an accessory and with child abuse. His father, Ronald, 56, was sentenced to up to 50 years in prison in July. The children involved come from two families that lived together in the house.

Rupert spoke to the court at his sentencing. At the plea hearing in August he admitted forcing a 9-year-old girl to perform oral sex on him. The victim he admitted to molesting was not one of his own children.

"I know I got to do my time," he said. "I'll do my time for my kids. I'm sorry to my kids, I sorry they think I've done this. I hope they have a better life than I do."

The mother of one of the victims spoke to the court before sentencing.

"It's a terrible thing when someone hurts a child, but it's worse when it's their parent," she said. "These kids will struggle with the belief their own father wouldn't keep them safe."

She asked Beach for as long a sentence as possible.

"I want my daughter and the rest of these kids to know they're safe," she said. "With the help of God and the counselors, they'll grow up knowing they're worth something and, with the help of the court, knowing he can never hurt them again."

The Michigan sentencing guidelines in the case prescribed a sentence of 10.5 years to 17.5 years in prison.

Beach made a few statements before sentencing Rupert.

"It's difficult for a person, even one like me who's seen hundreds of these case, to understand how people can do these things to other people."

Beach took particular issue with Rupert's statement about his children.

"You've done a horrible thing and even now you want to continue the facade that you didn't know what was going on," Beach said.

Rupert interrupted to say that he didn't.

Beach continued, "Oh, come on. You knew what was happening and you knew what the old boy was doing."

Beach sentenced Rupert to the longest term allowed by the guidelines, a minimum of 17.5 years. The upper limit of the sentence is 50 years.

He acceded to only one of a number of arguments from Rupert's lawyer, Matthew Antkowiak of Allegan, who tried to get the court to reduce the scoring that sets the Michigan sentencing guidelines.

He changed a score that marked Rupert as the leader in the sexual abuse, agreeing with Antkoviak's argument that Rupert's father Ronald had been the leader.

The change did not affect Rupert's sentence.

In another score, Beach refused Antkoviak's argument, which claimed there was no evidence of torture or sadism involved in the case, only sexual abuse for its own sake, done by the defendants.

Chief assistant Allegan County prosecutor Margaret Bakker responded.

"I can't think of a case where this fits more closely," Bakker said.

She detailed the number of pictures, the amount of sexual abuse, and the fact that the children were forced to perform sex acts on each other, as was documented in the pictures.

Another count of first-degree criminal sexual conduct and several other felonies were dismissed as part of a plea agreement prosecutors made with Rupert.

Dan Pepper can be reached at dpepper@allegannews.com or at 673-5534 or 685-5985.



Tip traps sex felon

Thursday, October 05, 2006

JOE SNAPPER

THE SAGINAW NEWS

Guarding a dark secret, one of Wisconsin's most wanted sex offenders made Saginaw his home until a tipster this week spoiled his two-year flight from justice, police say.

Billy D. Clanten, 25, of Kenosha, now awaits an extradition hearing from Saginaw.

The 3rd District State Police Fugitive Team nabbed Clanten at St. Paul Townhouse Village, 359 Vestry on Saginaw's South Side, said Detective 1st Lt. Mel Mathews, commander of the Bay Area Narcotics Enforcement Team, or BAYANET.

After his 2001 conviction for first-degree sexual assault of a child, Clanten was under community supervision in Kenosha when he disappeared in November 2004, said Wisconsin Department of Corrections spokesman John Dipko.

Clanten was among 15 of Wisconsin's "most wanted noncompliant sex offenders," meaning he failed to register and keep in contact with police, the state's records indicate.

Troopers surrounded the Vestry townhouse Monday morning after learning Clanten was inside a second-floor apartment with a woman and a child, Mathews said.

"He just tried to avoid the arrest by hopping out the window, and an officer happened to be waiting for him when he came down," Mathews said.

Clanten was not cooperative, Mathews said, so a trooper fired a Taser and brought the fugitive's time on the lam to an end with 50,000 volts of electricity.

Prosecutors in Wisconsin had authorized arrest warrants for Clanten on charges of violating parole and unlawful flight from prosecution, Mathews said.

Unless Clanten waives the right, an extradition hearing likely will take place in Saginaw County Circuit Court within the next two weeks. If the judge rules against him, Wisconsin authorities will have to bring Clanten back, Mathews said. v

Joe Snapper is a staff writer for The Saginaw News. You may reach him at 776-9715.

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Cops arrest man who worries Northview parents

Thursday, October 05, 2006

By Juanita Westaby

The Grand Rapids Press

PLAINFIELD TOWNSHIP -- A man described by Northview Public Schools as a sexual predator was arrested by sheriff's deputies Wednesday on an unrelated property destruction charge.

The 19-year-old suspect, whose name wasn't released by police or administrators, posted \$200 bond and will be arraigned next week in Rockford District Court on a misdemeanor charge of malicious destruction of property, Kent County sheriff's Lt. Roger Parent said.

Deputies responded to school administrators' concerns by trying to determine if he lived in the area, and then arrested him at his Plainfield Township residence on the outstanding warrant, Parent said. Police are not investigating any sex crimes against the man and he does not have any convictions for sex crimes.

Police also investigated a report from a 13-year-old girl that the man may have contacted her via instant messaging, but deputies could not confirm any link to the 19-year-old, Parent said.

The school district took the unusual step Wednesday of issuing an alert to parents that a potential sexual predator was living in Plainfield Township and had been released from a local mental facility.

At least one parent is ensuring afternoon supervision for her child, and Northview schools phones were busy Wednesday after a letter warned "an aggressive sexual predator and pedophile" was placed in the community.

Overall, parents were "incredibly thankful and supportive," Superintendent Michael Stearns said of the letter he issued.

"They're glad that they have the information that allows them to have another level of safety for their children, of monitoring them."

The district sent home the warning to parents because of frustration by district officials that Michigan Department of Human Services, local law enforcement, Community Mental Health and the courts could not prevent the 19-year-old man from locating there.

He reportedly left a mental treatment facility. He has not been charged with any felony criminal sexual conduct charges, Kent County Prosecutor William Forsyth said.

An East Oakview Elementary School parent took the precaution of having an adult supervise her child immediately after school until she can get home, Principal Chad Sutcliffe said.

There was "an instant reaction" at the Highlands Middle School PTC meeting Tuesday night, Principal Dan Duba said.

"They were appreciative that we got this off the e-mail at 2:15," he said. "It's an awareness factor."

The district has playground surveillance and schools keep doors locked except for supervised front doors, administrators said.



Limit predators' Internet access

Thursday, October 05, 2006

A new law barring child-sex offenders from online social networking Websites can be another resource for law enforcement. Police and prosecutors need this sort of tool to protect children.

House legislation restricting access recently passed 107 to 0, and was referred to the Senate. The Senate would be wise to support the bills. Popular sites such as MySpace.com have become places where predators can easily engage and lure kids.

The way predators mask their identity and navigate sites such as MySpace and Facebook is well chronicled. Parents are the first line of defense, but law enforcement needs stronger legal tools to help. Currently, a child has to be propositioned before law enforcement can act. That's too late.

The House bills sponsored by David Law, R-Commerce Township and David Farhat, R-Fruitport, are tie-barred. Mr. Law's bill would prohibit a person convicted of a sex offense involving a person under 18, who used a computer in the commission of that offense, from accessing a commercial social networking Website. A person convicted of an offense, but didn't use a computer, could not have contact with a person whom he or she had reason to believe was under the age of 18 through such a Website.

A first offense would be a misdemeanor punishable by up to one year in jail or not more than \$1,000 or both. A second or subsequent violation would be a

felony with up to a five year sentence and/or a fine of up to \$5,000. Mr. Farhat's bill amends state code for the felony sentencing guidelines.

Internet sites restricted include social networking services that permit users to communicate with each other, create online profiles including personal information and share online journals.

Police and prosecutors nationwide recognize the dangers that children face online. The Michigan State Police Department has an Internet Crimes Against Children task force that attempts to root out sexual deviants including by posing as children online. This summer, Department of Corrections parole officers who monitor sex offenders underwent training to detect if their parolees are participating in online communities. Both organizations support the bills.

The goal should be to stop sex offenders when they first engage children online, before they've been able to coerce an unsuspecting child into a rendezvous. Enforcement won't be easy. It never is with these types of crimes. But this legislation has value. With State Police, prison and local police efforts, and greater community awareness, the added powers in this legislation can be effective and serve as a deterrent.

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Michigan Report

October 2, 2006

REPORT OUTLINES PROPOSALS FOR 'AGING' FOSTER CARE YOUTH

A plan to provide Medicaid health care coverage and immediate access to job training to young people who “age out” of the foster care system at age 18 was unveiled Monday by the Department of Human Services.

The 21-step proposal to the Legislature is aimed at helping fight the tendency that those young people have to become poor, homeless and unemployed. Included in the proposals is one that would allow those 18 or older to voluntarily remain in foster care after they have otherwise “aged out.”

Supreme Court Justice Maura Corrigan said, in a release, that “many foster care youths face a bleak future after they age out, as both national and state statistics.” An estimated 450 young people in foster care reach age 18 each year in the state, officials said.

The task force on the situation was convened in January by Ms. Corrigan and DHS Director Marianne Udow, and included a number of former foster-care youths. The 19-page report is available at the department’s [website](#).

The report says that most children are actually cared for by their parents for some years after they turn 18, but that youths in foster care often have to “make the transition into adulthood without parental support. Past experiences of trauma, neglect, abuse, and abandonment affect a foster youth’s ability to face life’s challenges without a loving family or an enduring connection.”

And in a statement Ms. Udow said it is a “myth” to assume that a youth is ready for independence at 18.

The report recommends 21 different steps to help ease the transition those youths will face, including a website with information specifically geared towards those young people; automatic referrals to Michigan Works jobs centers; “seamless” Medicaid eligibility until age 21 and expanded dental care; easy access to critical documents like birth certificates; housing information and education; an easy way for schools to access records from different schools; and expanded financial support for secondary education.

Ms. Udow said the recommendations, if implemented, could help make a significant difference to the lives of foster care youth who age out of the system.



Posted on Thu, Oct. 05, 2006

Judge awards \$11.3 million in foster care lawsuit

Associated Press

ATLANTA - A federal judge has awarded \$11.3 million in fees and expenses to lawyers whose lawsuit against the state led to reforms in foster care.

U.S. District Judge Marvin Shoob made the award, which was reduced from the requested \$16 million, Tuesday.

The money will be split between the New York-based nonprofit Children's Rights Inc., and the Atlanta firm of Bondurant, Mixon and Elmore.

The attorneys deserved the award because their lawsuit had beneficial results despite the state's resistance to reform, Shoob wrote.

The state settled the case last year after fighting it for nearly three years. Georgia child welfare officials agreed to lower worker caseloads, improve investigations into child abuse and neglect, provide foster children with proper health services and prevent overcrowding in foster homes.

"After 58 years as a practicing attorney and federal judge, the court is unaware of any other case in which the plaintiff class has achieved such a favorable result on such a comprehensive scale," Shoob said.

But Shoob's decision disappointed state officials, who had said the award should be between \$6 million and \$8 million.

"Eleven million dollars could pay the salaries of every caseworker in Fulton County for a year, or it could pay for more than 1,800 children in foster care for a year," said B.J. Walker, the commissioner of the state Department of Human Resources. "Children are the losers."

Shoob largely rejected the state's argument that the award should focus mainly on attorney hours and expenses. Shoob said he increased the award beyond that because of the results that children's advocates achieved.

The judge awarded fees based on rates as high as \$495 an hour for some of the attorneys in the case. He asserted that the state is in part to blame because it fought the case so long.

"To a great extent," Shoob said in his decision, "the size of the award reflects state defendant's strategy of resistance against efforts to reform a foster care system that even they ultimately admitted was badly in need of reform."

Ira Lustbader, associate director of Children's Rights, said the money will go back into the group's efforts to protect children in failing child welfare systems.

Information from: *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, <http://www.ajc.com>



Jurors hear of killing, knife fight as trial opens

Thursday, October 05, 2006

By John Agar

The Grand Rapids Press

GRAND RAPIDS -- As Silvia Sanchez-Parada lay dead in her kitchen, her husband and another man, who rented a room in their home, staggered out, bloodied and exhausted after a knife fight.

Neighbors thought the two men had been attacked.

The husband, Leoncio Garcia-Lopez, held the couple's then-9-month-old son in his bloody arms. He nearly collapsed from a stab wound that punctured a lung. Air sucked through his chest when pressure was removed, jurors were told Wednesday in Kent County Circuit Court.

Across the street, neighbors also tended to the other injured man, Edwin Lario-Munoz, 20, who had stab wounds, according to opening statements in the trial for Lario-Munoz, charged with open murder for the woman's slaying. He also is charged with killing the woman's unborn baby.

Police responding to the Oct. 14, 2005, call had little to go on. They were told: "Man possibly killing wife, blood everywhere," Officer Daniel Lubbers said.

A little later, police found Sanchez-Parada, strangled, on the kitchen floor.

Lario-Munoz told everyone that Garcia-Lopez killed his own wife, then attacked him. Garcia-Lopez said the other man killed his wife, then attacked him with a knife and carving fork when he got home from work, according to opening statements. Grand Rapids Police said they determined that Lario-Munoz, whose stories started to change, was the one who strangled Sanchez-Parada, killing her and her unborn baby.

Testimony will continue today before Kent County Circuit Judge Dennis Kolenda.

Assistant Prosecutor Jay Stone told jurors that Lario-Munoz -- a Honduran native once on the cover of Parade magazine after testifying before a U.S. Senate subcommittee about orphaned immigrant children -- killed the woman soon after he found out that he would have to leave the house at 848 Baxter St. SE.

He had been placed there by Bethany Christian Services, but he could not get along with the other family.

Defense attorney Alida Bryant said that alleged motive did not make sense because her client had no ties to the couple or the home. She told jurors that the husband's DNA was found under the victim's fingernails, and on her neck.

The prosecutor said the defendant changed his story when detectives said he was trying to put an innocent man in prison. He then told police that "when I saw her die, I was the only one there, and I didn't want them to bring that ... on me," Stone said.

Evidence will show that the husband was at work at Chili's restaurant on 28th Street SE when his wife died, the prosecutor said.

When the husband returned home, he found the front door dead-bolted, which was unusual. Eventually, Lario-Munoz let him in, and started making "nonsensical statements," including warnings that gang members were upstairs, Stone said. Garcia-Lopez was concerned, and got his son. He asked about his wife, but Lario-Munoz didn't answer. He said he would now have to tie up the husband, and demanded

bank cards.

"At that point, the defendant says, 'I'm going to kill you,'" Stone said.

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Health help offered

NEWS UPDATE

LAPEER COUNTY

THE FLINT JOURNAL FIRST EDITION

Thursday, October 05, 2006

By James L. Smith

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With an unemployment rate higher than the state's average, the Lapeer County Health Department is offering help to county residents without health insurance.

There are programs for infants and children and pregnant women; immunizations for children and people traveling overseas; community education classes on health topics; and home care programs for seniors.

Details: Coordinator Sally Popa, (810) 667-0393.

- James L. Smith

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Muskegon Chronicle

Pantries to distribute food

Thursday, October 05, 2006

FROM LOCAL REPORTS

Area food pantries will distribute 7,500 pounds of fresh fruit, vegetables and other food Friday and Oct. 20 at St. Patrick's Catholic Church, 901 Columbus, Grand Haven.

The events start at 10 a.m. and the food is free for those in need. The food is provided by the Second Harvest Gleaners Food Bank of West Michigan and Love INC.

Visitors are asked to bring their own grocery bags.

For information, call Love INC at (616) 846-2701.

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GIVING AND LIVING: Volunteer took hunger fight to the Internet

October 5, 2006

Who is he?	Jeff Sovel, 45, of Wixom, a computer network specialist for GE Healthcare.
Who does he help?	He volunteers at Hospitality House, a food pantry in Walled Lake, and in 2004, helped develop www.pantrynet.org , a Web site to help people find food pantries serving low-income people in Michigan.
What happened after that?	Gleaners Community Food Bank for Southeastern Michigan took over operation of the Web site last year. "The primary thing about the Web site is it offers tools to our pantry partners so they can improve themselves without having to spend a lot of money," said Gerry Brisson, Gleaners vice president of development.
What's Sovel up to now?	He's thinking about ways to make the food pantry system more efficient by having people donate cash instead of canned goods. "Donating canned goods is not the ideal mechanism to feed a lot of people," Sovel said.
How could that help?	The food bank could buy more food and there are significant tax advantages for making a cash donation to a food bank, according to Sovel. A \$10 donation actually costs the donor \$7.50 after the federal tax write-off and a state tax credit that gives individuals a credit of \$100 for a \$200 donation, married couples a credit of \$200 for a \$400 donation and businesses a credit of \$5,000 for a \$10,000 donation. The credit means the amount is deducted from the state tax that is owed. Gleaners' Brisson says that while cash donations can leverage more food for hungry people and can help reduce tax bills for donors, he doesn't want to discourage people from organizing canned-food drives.
What can you do?	Donations of cash or food items are welcome -- your choice. Check out the Gleaners Web site, www.gcfb.org , or call 313-923-3535 anytime.
	Got a story about volunteering or other acts of kindness you'd like to share with Free Press readers? Call reporters Tina Lam at 313-222-6421 or Jack Kresnak at 313-223-4544 or e-mail them at giving@freepress.com .
	<i>By Jack Kresnak</i>



Jeff Sovel, 45, helped create a Web site to help people find food pantries. (Family photo)



Juvenile justice effort honored

Thursday, October 05, 2006

THE SAGINAW NEWS

The Saginaw County Human Services Collaborative Body gave this year's Bennie T. Woodard Jr. Award to the Juvenile Justice Family Program.

The initiative brings together the 10th District Court Family Division, the Saginaw Department of Human Services and the Saginaw County Mental Health Authority to identify health and emotional issues contributing to juvenile delinquent behavior, and to help young people find the help they need.

The award honors community collaboratives that work to improve the lives of families in Saginaw County. The collaborative body is the human service planning body for Saginaw County. Woodard was Saginaw County's director of public health from 1987 to 1996.

Honorable mention awards went to:

t Healthy Start Great Beginnings -- The partnership between Birth-5 and Saginaw County Department of Public Health Healthy Start serves families with young children to help them access health services.

Saginaw County United Way Financial Assistance Coalition -- A collaboration of United Way, nonprofit organizations, banks, educational institutions and IRS-certified volunteers that helps low-income residents, seniors and people with disabilities prepare their tax returns. v

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10/04/2006

Ask the Judge - 10/4/06

By: Judge Mark McCabe , 67th District Court



"I am a divorced mother of two small children. My ex-husband doesn't pay child support unless he's dragged into court and never wants to visit with his kids. I am planning to get married again early next year. My husband-to-be loves my children and wants to adopt them when we get married. I'm worried that my ex is going to prevent this from happening for no reason other than he is angry with me. I know I'll have to hire an attorney, but would like a little advance advice on what we'll be facing. Thank you."

Your question is very timely. November of each year has been designated as National Adoption Month in the United States by Presidential proclamation. As part of this recognition, National Adoption Day for this year is Nov. 18.

Historically adoption is a very ancient concept dating back to ancient Greece, Egypt and Babylonia.

In the United States, adoption was a very informal process until the 1850s when Massachusetts enacted the first adoption statute. Under its statute, an adoption required judicial approval, consent of the child's parent or guardian and a finding that the prospective family was of sufficient ability to raise the child.

Various states followed with their own adoption statutes and in 1891, Michigan enacted the first adoption statute requiring judicial investigation into a prospective parent's home prior to the final approval of an adoption.

There have been a number of changes in the general approach to adoptions and adoption records including the concepts of both open and closed adoptions. A number of stories have also been told of how children were placed in adoptive homes and what eventually happened to them.

For example, a very famous experimental placement and adoption method was the so-called "orphan trains" emanating from New York City. From 1854 to 1929 two New York institutions, the Children's Aid Society and the New York Foundling Hospital, placed some 150,000 to 200,000 children who were either orphans, abandoned, runaways or from street gangs, on passenger trains from New York City to the Midwest to place them with farm families and to get them out of New York's environment. The idea was for farm families to provide these children with food, clothing and a place to live in exchange for their help on the farms. The experiment worked for the most part and many of these children were eventually adopted and went on to have successful lives in varying fields. Two of the children became state governors. There are countless other stories of individuals who were adopted and had similar successes.

Moving to the 21st Century, Michigan's laws on adoption are very specific when it comes to situations such as you are contemplating. Perhaps the most important concept for you to remember in a case such as yours is this - until such time as a Family Court Judge terminates the rights of the natural father or he consents to the adoption, the Court cannot approve the adoption.

Like most civil court matters, an adoption begins with the filing of a petition. The court, pursuant to statute, will immediately order an investigation by an employee or agent of the court as to the suitability of the adoptive parent or parents. The report is to be completed and filed within three months. Assuming the natural parent hasn't consented, and it's a good report as to the adoptive parents, Michigan's statute provides in pertinent part as follows as to what happens next:

"If the parents of a children are divorced ... and if the parent having legal custody of the child subsequently marries and that parent's spouse petitions to adopt the child, the court upon notice and hearing may issue an order terminating the rights of the other parent if both of the following occur:

(a) The other parent, having the ability to support, or assist in supporting, the child, has failed or neglected to provide regular and substantial support for the child or if a support order has been entered, has failed to substantially comply with the order, for a period of two years or more before the filing of the petition.

(b) The other parent, having the ability to visit, contact, or communicate with the child, has regularly and substantially failed or neglected to do so for a period of two years or more before the filing of the petition."

If the court is satisfied that the petitioner has sustained his burden of proof as to these two requirements, then the adoption will be approved, all other things being equal. If not, then the petition will be denied.

This is one of these situations where everything depends on the facts and you are quite right about needing an attorney. From what you've told me, if your ex doesn't consent, this may be an uphill battle for you and your new husband.

The court must always consider what's in the best interest of the children while at the same time ensuring that everyone's rights are protected.

Michigan Report

October 2, 2006

15 MORE COUNTIES GETTING J.E.T. PROGRAM

The Jobs, Education and Training program, aimed at getting more people who are receiving cash assistance from the state to work as part of new federal guidelines, will expand into 15 more counties beginning this month, Department of Human Services Director Marianne Udow announced Monday.

Four counties, Kent, Wayne, Oakland and Sanilac, have been running under JET since April.

The new counties under the program will be Antrim, Benzie, Berrien, Clinton, Eaton, Genesee, Grand Traverse, Ingham, Kalkaska, Leelanau, Macomb, Manistee, Muskegon, Saginaw and Washtenaw. Four more offices are expected to be added to Wayne County and two will be added in Oakland County, as well.



Sign me up for Bridge Card

FLINT JOURNAL LETTER TO THE EDITOR

MUNDY TOWNSHIP

THE FLINT JOURNAL FIRST EDITION

Thursday, October 05, 2006

JOURNAL READER

I got a kick out of Vanita Singleton's letter "Bridge Card critic off base" [Your Views, Sept. 21, Page A10].

She says it is none of our business if someone drives to the grocery store in a Cadillac wearing a \$400 outfit with diamonds from head to toe to buy lobster and steak using their Bridge Card. I say it is our (taxpayers') business, since we are paying for this card.

This is the working man's tax dollars. We should all be concerned on how money is being spent.

I am not on the Bridge Card, but my whole wardrobe doesn't amount to much more than \$400.

I cannot afford a Cadillac and I am lucky to have steak or lobster once a month.

Where can I get a Bridge Card?

John M. Niven

Mundy Township

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This is a printer friendly version of an article from **The Detroit News**
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October 5, 2006

Around Metro Detroit: Spotlight

Detroit volunteer dedicated to less fortunate

Shawn D. Lewis / The Detroit News

Marcia Lee, 23, knew early on that she wanted to spend her life helping others. She began volunteering in high school, and while in college facilitated a course on homelessness.

The program, People in Action for Ann Arbor, focused on people in need.

"We wanted to find ways to help the homeless, but not in the traditional ways," she said. "We wanted to engage them in conversations to find out exactly what it was they needed."

So Lee and her colleagues collected discarded furniture from University of Michigan students in Ann Arbor and donated it to an organization that helped former homeless people who were settling into apartments.

"It was perfectly good furniture," Lee said. "The students just didn't need it when they moved out."

Her spirit of helping others then took another turn. While working on her thesis in Detroit she met Brother Rick Samyn, who was the Urban Farm Coordinator for the Earth Works garden, an urban agriculture project administered by the Capuchin Soup Kitchen in Detroit.

"I told him I want to do something as a volunteer, as a gateway to figure out ways to incorporate volunteering and service as a way of living," she said.

Lee said she wanted to do a year of volunteer service with a faith-based organization and Brother Rick offered the chance at the nonprofit Capuchin.

"I started here in August 2005, and my time ended in July, but I decided to stay until the end of November."

She is working with a program called CapCorps, a Franciscan-centered program that offers young men and women an opportunity to work with an underserved community while living a simple lifestyle in that community. Lee lives with the Capuchins, gets health insurance, access to a car and is paid \$100 a month.

Much of her time is spent coordinating volunteers for the Growing Healthy Kids program, whose goal is to provide healthy outdoor activities for families, while teaching them about organic gardening and healthy nutritional practices.

"Volunteering gives me a sense of hope that there is an infinite possibility of beauty in the world, and our ability to create it," Lee said. Lee also volunteers at the Detroit Asian Youth Project, a program for Asian young people who live in Metro Detroit.

"I want to help them develop a sense of identity in Detroit," she said. "A lot of times, they can get lost."

You can reach Shawn D. Lewis at (248) 647-8825 or slewis@detnews.com.

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Detroit's Head Start is improving its marks

BY CHASTITY PRATT

FREE PRESS EDUCATION WRITER

October 5, 2006

Detroit's ailing Head Start program is showing signs of improvement after suffering recent sanctions from the federal government, according to the head of the educational and social services program for low-income preschool children.

The city's program was cut by 1,415 seats for this year after the Administration for Children and Families, part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, found problems with management and spending.

But last month, the administration gave the city permission to recover 721 half-day Head Start seats after plans to improve the system locally were submitted to the federal government.

It doesn't mean the program is in the clear, but changes are in the works, said Channell Wilkins, director for Head Start, which is based in Washington, D.C.

"They're clearly in recovery," Wilkins said. "Or we wouldn't have given those slots back."

Head Start is a preschool, social and health program for low-income children ages 3 and 4, as well as their families. Run by the city's Department of Human Services, the Head Start program is one of the largest in the country, with 6,708 students.

United Children and Families, one of the organizations that runs Head Start programs in Detroit, will add 204 seats to its current enrollment of about 900 students.

Roxanne Campbell, project director with UCF who has worked with Head Start for 19 years, said the half-day classes are not the preferred schedules, but UCF expects to have two or three new sites operating to serve those kids and their families by November.

Because changes in welfare require people to return to work sooner, "there's a need for full-day programs, but we just don't have the capacity," she said, adding that some Head Start education is better than none.

Last year, 2,000 seats were cut from Detroit Head Start, but that number was reduced to 1,415.

Shenetta Coleman, director of the Department of Human Services in Detroit, said her office is exploring whether some closed Detroit Public Schools buildings could be used for Head Start classrooms.



Jacob Vega, 4, and Erykah Stewart, 3, work on pronouncing the letter M at their Head Start class last month. The city's program was cut by 1,415 seats after the federal government found problems. But now, the city is allowed to recover 721 half-day seats after submitting plans to improve. (ERIC SEALS/Detroit Free Press)

The additional classes are expected to get started this fall -- even though the regular school year already has begun -- but that shouldn't be a problem because Head Start recruits students year-round, Coleman said.

"We're trying to get the word out, talking about innovative things like lit drops and pulling together a recruitment team," Coleman said.

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Supreme Court Rule Changes

MIRS, Wednesday, October 4, 2006

The state Supreme Court today announced the adoption of the following rule changes:

- Requiring a notice of noncompliance, order of hospitalization or a court-issued new or modified order for people that have been hospitalized without a hearing as ordered by the court.
- Making the appellant responsible for securing the filing of the transcripts unless they fall under one of the exceptions.
- Allowing records to be filed by fax communication in juvenile cases.
- Clarifies the requirement that the payment of proceeds may be made only to a conservator on behalf of a legally incapacitated adult or a minor entitled to more than \$5,000 in any one year during minority.